

**2004-2005 CD# 20.2
ALA Midwinter Meeting
January 19, 2005**

**RESOLUTION OPPOSING GPO'S DECISION TO ELIMINATE
PRINT DISTRIBUTION OF IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION**

WHEREAS, the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) was established by Congress more than 150 years ago as a geographically dispersed system to provide no-fee public access to government information; and

WHEREAS, the FDLP has proven to be a very successful partnership among Congress, federal agencies, the courts, the Government Printing Office (GPO), depository libraries, and the American public in ensuring the public's right to know; and

WHEREAS, the American Library Association (ALA) has always supported the move to a more electronic FDLP and embraces the benefits of technology to improve public access, yet recognizes that user needs vary; and

WHEREAS, ALA and user groups have responded to recent requests for planning input from the Public Printer of the United States by emphasizing the needs for dissemination of appropriate formats of government information; and

WHEREAS, government information must be disseminated in a usable format that meets the diverse needs of the American public, and print may be the most appropriate format to serve congressional constituents; and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Documents recently informed the library community that GPO's FY 2006 Salaries and Expenses (S&E) appropriations request for the FDLP will include funding to cover little more than the cost of production and distribution of the 50 titles on the *Essential Titles for Public Use in Paper Format* (http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/pubs/estitles.html); and

WHEREAS, the Essential Titles list has not been revised since 2000 and does not include important materials including maps, geological information, administrative decisions and other legal materials, Senate and House reports, documents, and hearings that inform the citizenry of the workings of Congress; and

WHEREAS, GPO has not yet established a reliable system ensuring delivery, authenticity, permanent public access, and preservation of electronic information products they disseminate and make available online; and

WHEREAS, research and information technology standards and best practices have not yet been developed to the point of ensuring authenticity and preservation of electronic information products; and

WHEREAS, depository libraries make significant investments to participate in the FDLP and expend substantial resources for: staff and administration; facilities and shelving; technological infrastructure, including hardware, software, and network capabilities needed to support electronic access; connectivity charges; cataloging and binding costs; and additional commercial products and databases that are recommended by the GPO to facilitate use of government information collections; and

WHEREAS, the January 2005 GPO Update distributed at the 2005 ALA Midwinter Meeting describes a Print on Demand (POD) Allowance Program of \$500 for selective depository libraries and \$1500 for 53 regional depository libraries for titles that are not on the *Essential Titles List*; and

WHEREAS, the proposed POD allowance fails to provide sufficient funds to purchase print titles previously distributed at no cost to participating libraries; and

WHEREAS, the change to POD to acquire print materials will add significant additional administrative and operating costs to depository libraries; and,

WHEREAS, the rapid move to an almost all-electronic depository library program fails to meet the needs of many congressional constituents who are economically or technologically disadvantaged and others who cannot make use of necessary technological infrastructure to access electronic government information; and

WHEREAS, the FY 2006 S&E appropriations request prematurely shifts operational emphasis from the production and distribution of print products to the development of new initiatives; and

WHEREAS, GPO's new initiatives should not come at the expense of public access to usable formats or place undue new burdens on the American public and depository libraries; and

WHEREAS, in the past ALA has always supported the full funding of GPO's S&E appropriation because priority was given to acquisition, production and distribution of depository materials to meet the diverse needs of all users; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association urge the Government Printing Office (GPO) to provide government information in appropriate formats, including print titles as identified by the depository library community, that meet the needs of the American public; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association urge Congress to increase GPO's FY 2006 Salaries and Expenses (S&E) appropriations to maintain production and distribution of print materials to depository libraries at the FY 2004 level; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association urge Congress to require that GPO maintain production and distribution of print materials to depository libraries at no less than the FY 2004 level; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association urge Congress to hold timely oversight hearings on GPO's new initiatives and changes to the Federal Depository Library Program.

Adopted by: Committee on Legislation, January 17, 2005

Endorsed in principle by GIS, January 17, 2005

Endorsed in principle by GODORT, January 17, 2005

Endorsed in principle by FAFLRT, January 17, 2005

Endorsed in principle by IFC, January 18, 2005

Policy: 1.3-A

Prior History:

CD 10.6: "Resolution on Government Publications Discontinued or Endangered," June 1990.

CD#20.3: "Resolution on the Right of Access to Federal Information," July 1988.